

Critically rejecting the uncritical acceptance of criticism

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 08 Apr 2002

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/3131>

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Dan'I Danehy-Oakes — 08 Apr 2002, 20:36

Marc (and, yes, somehow the latin form `_does_` suggest itself) asks:

Should we really question everything that comes from the second hand account? What about The Book of the Long Sun? All of that could be totally bogus. But we have to believe something. I think reliability should only be questioned to match an overwhelming theme or message.

Unfortunately, that doesn't seem to fit very well with the way Wolfe does things in general. He goes out of his way to show us, again and again, that his narrators are in greater or lesser ways "unreliable."

That said: Yes, I think that we are intended to recognize that tBotLS, while not "totally bogus," is deeply informed by Horn's hero-worship of Silk. Horn is not consciously lying, but he is warping, wending the text to serve his purposes. It is not the facts, but the truth as he sees it. I suspect that a careful reading of "Short" will inform the reading of "Long" to show some specific ways in which it `_is_`, shall we say, bent by Horn's attitude toward Silk.

Then, as Jerry F. pointed out, "it's kind of begging the question to believe things that fit a theory and doubt things that conflict." One has to simultaneously erect theories of what's going on based on what aspects of the texts seem to be reliable (for example, the `_general_` outline of the `_external_` events of all the Lupiverse books seems likely to be reliable), while building a model of what is reliable that works with the theories of what's going on. In other words, you have to work at the puzzle from both sides, not just the "what's reliable" side and not just the "this is the theory that puts it all together" side. You wind up building a house of cards, but if you do it right, an elephant can walk on it.